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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**NEW ALBANY MAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS
IMPRISONMENT AS ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL**

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that ERIC PEL NORTON, 31, New Albany, Indiana, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge David F. Hamilton to fifteen years imprisonment for being a felon in possession of a firearm. This case followed an investigation by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Jennings County Sheriff's Department, the Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Jennings County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms. This prosecution is part of the PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS national initiative to reduce gun violence.

On February 7, 2002, NORTON was arrested by the Jefferson County Sheriff's

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Department for Attempted Burglary in connection with the midday break-in of a Jefferson County home. An alert homeowner detained NORTON until police arrived.. When police searched the car NORTON was driving, they found a .357 Magnum revolver and a Beretta, a semi-automatic pistol in the car's trunk. A Jennings County resident reported these two firearms stolen from his home following a break-in earlier that same day. NORTON was sentenced to ten-year concurrent sentences for each of these break-ins in state court.

The two firearms stolen from the Jennings County resident were the subject of the federal prosecution. NORTON cannot possess firearms because of previous felony convictions, including a 1994 conviction for armed bank robbery and 1995 convictions for two counts of burglary.

According to First Assistant United States Attorney Timothy M. Morrison, who prosecuted the case for the government, a felon in possession of a firearm faces up to ten (10) years imprisonment. However, NORTON has the three prior qualifying felonies and fell under the Armed Career Criminal sentencing statute. A person sentenced under such provision faces a minimum, mandatory period of imprisonment of fifteen (15) years.

NORTON was also sentenced to an additional 27 months imprisonment for violating the conditions of his supervised release from his bank robbery conviction in 1994. Because he was on supervised release for that offense at the time of these new offenses, that 27 months will be served consecutively to the 15 year sentence he received for possessing the firearms. The federal sentence will be served concurrently with the 10-year state burglary sentences. Therefore,

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NORTON received a sentence of 207 months. Considering that federal “good-time” provisions allow only 60 days credit per year, NORTON must serve more than 14 years of actual time in prison.

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